

Hyde School
As A
System

HYDE SCHOOL AS A SYSTEM A GUIDE TO THE SYSTEMS CHART

I recently purchased a “weed wacker” for our lawn. The box containing this tool touted the claim “minimal assembly required.” I took the box home, took out the parts, and soon reflected on how the word “minimal” is a relative term. When I observed the assembly diagram, I immediately knew that I was in trouble, big trouble. I’d love to report that I then utilized my Hyde education and, after an hour or two, attacked my lawn surging with the pride of a private victory. The truth? I took the weed wacker back to True Value Hardware and took advantage of its touted claim of free assembly.

Since we committed to our Continuous Improvement Program (CIP), we have discovered the importance of viewing Hyde as an all-encompassing system and have tried to adopt what Peter Senge (see **The Fifth Discipline**) calls “Systems Thinking.” However, many of us on the faculty initially balked at such structure and discipline (due to a predominance of liberal arts backgrounds?), fearing that it would impair the very intuition we had spent years developing and fine-tuning. As a result, it was very difficult for us to develop our Systems Chart. In turn, comprehending it all at once can be somewhat intimidating, like “trying to sip from a firehose.” (However, I might compare it to assembling a weed wacker.) Hyde is a complex place, more complex than a weed wacker. Our Systems Chart is more easily understood if separated into its component parts:

Mission **Inputs** **Transformation Process** **Outputs**

This guide explains the chart one component at a time. We begin with the **Mission** of Hyde School:

1. To provide a learning environment where individuals develop character and discover a deeper purpose in their lives; and
2. To be a model school community that develops citizens who will renew the American experiment in democracy.

Oddly enough, we did not arrive at a consensus on this statement until we had already been involved with CIP for six months. This consensus was an evolutionary one that began with considerable study of the work of W. H. Deming and various theories of Total Quality Management (TQM). We also formed several different quality groups: Academics, Admissions, Maintenance, Dining, Family Learning Center, Alumni, Student Life, and a Program Group. Each group engaged in an exercise called "Stop, Start, and Continue." In our respective groups we asked ourselves, "What are some things we're doing that we feel we should **stop** doing? What should we **start** doing? What are we doing that we should **continue** doing?"

During this initial exercise we began to see reasons to jump on the TQM bandwagon. For one, we realized that many of us were publicly engaged in activities that we privately believed were of limited value. Furthermore, we were surprised to discover that we shared similar ideas on new directions we might take. In short, we discovered that Hyde's proverbial left hand didn't always know what its right hand was doing. After the "Stop, Start, Continue" exercise, each group attempted to develop a mission statement. Then the Program Group, responsible for administering CIP, assembled all of these mission statements and began to compile a common statement that would reflect the beliefs of the entire Hyde community.

After a two-day summit off campus, we arrived at the two-sentence statement. I quote the explanation I gave in **Malcolm's Monthly**:

THE HYDE MISSION

To provide a learning environment where individuals develop character and discover a deeper purpose in their lives.

To be a model school community that develops citizens who will renew the American experiment in democracy.

The above two sentences are the result of deliberations by four of us - Paul Hurd, John Young, Irving Stubbs, and myself - in Williamsburg, VA. Our charge was to conduct a "soup to nuts" analysis of Hyde School for our Continuous Improvement Program. After two intense days we had completed Hyde's system chart - seven full size sheets of newsprint with boxes, lines and arrows. We used up one of those days in order to arrive at a consensus on these two sentences. Scores of synonyms were considered for some words in particular - provide, American experiment, renew.

Past attempts at hammering out a mission have typically found us using our process (character education) to describe our mission. This has caused us to view our means as if they were ends in themselves. This time we asked, what is the end of character development? We conclude that it is to help people find a deeper purpose in their lives. Our Statement of Purpose (1990) came close to expressing our mission but it does not speak to Hyde's founding and the challenge which that represents to an old order (the talent model). This time we asked, what is the problem for which the Statement of Purpose is the solution? We conclude that the American experiment is in need of renewal. What does that mean?

*I see the American experiment as embodied in Jefferson, Lincoln and King. In the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson wrote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." Then, in 1863, Lincoln stood on a Pennsylvania battlefield where there had been 40,000+ casualties over a two day period as a result of Americans killing each other and he reminded us that our nation was "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." King brought it full circle 100 years later in a most symbolic fashion when he stood on the steps of Lincoln's very monument and repeated Jefferson's very words with particular emphasis on the word **all**. These three spoke of a sacred belief in the uniqueness of human potential. Two of them died for it. "It is for us the living" to continue to test whether "any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."*

(Malcolm's Monthly, December, Vol. VI, Issue 4)

THE MISSION OF HYDE SCHOOL

To provide a learning environment
where individuals develop
character and discover a deeper
purpose in their lives.

AND

To be a model school community
that develops citizens who will
renew the American experiment
in democracy.

OUTPUTS

In his book **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, Steven Covey proclaims, "Begin with the end in mind." Many schools and other organizations simply perpetuate familiar programs, processes, or traditions without tying them to specific objectives or an overall mission. At the core of the Deming philosophy is the belief that companies and organizations must foster jubilant customers. The

OUTPUTS

STUDENTS:

1. Core Knowledge and Skills
2. Capacity to Use Education
3. Self-confidence
4. Creativity - The Nine Dots
5. Personal vision
6. Perseverance
7. Integrity of Relationships
8. Reverence for Learning
9. Responsible and Effective Citizenship
10. Moral Compass - Bet on the Truth

PARENTS:

1. Personal liberation from Children's Challenges
2. Vision Beyond Parenthood
3. Simultaneous Personal Growth with Children
4. Lifelong Bonds with the School and its People
5. The Hyde Graduation

more common goal of satisfied customers doesn't go far enough. Deming uses the term "value added" (This might loosely be defined as the net difference between satisfied and jubilant.) to describe the type of outputs that companies should strive to foster.

Initially, these were difficult concepts for us to embrace because we were uncomfortable with the notion of mixing business and education principles. We balked at the very notion of considering our students or their parents as "customers." After we

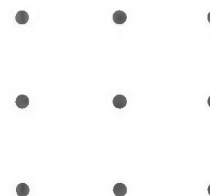
digested the semantics of the TQM language, we did realize that a satisfied customer would be a student or a parent who paid a tuition figure and, in return, received a high school diploma and perhaps a favorable college admission selection. This would probably be an expectation of any family sending a child to any boarding school.

While we at Hyde have long maintained that students and parents receive many more benefits than a diploma and college admissions, we have never taken the time to define what those outputs are. Thus, the value added outputs are those benefits that Hyde students and parents receive that surpass those that they might have originally expected. In other words, at graduation we want students and parents to feel, "Wow, this experience had so many more benefits than I ever expected!" With this in mind, we then attempted to identify the actual outputs we wished to inspire at Hyde and came up with ten student outputs and five parent outputs.

STUDENT OUTPUTS

1. Core Knowledge and Skills
2. Capacity to Use Education
3. Self-confidence
4. Creativity - The Nine Dots
5. Personal Vision
6. Perseverance
7. Integrity of Relationships
8. Reverence for Learning
9. Responsible and Effective Citizenship
10. Moral Compass - Bet on the Truth

First, we want students to be able to engage in critical thinking. The second objective refers to the student's ability to use and apply the lessons learned at Hyde to the outside world, to see the connections between the Hyde education and future experiences. Third, we hope students will gain greater confidence as a result of the challenges they face at Hyde and, fourth, that this confidence will translate into an enterprising curiosity. The Nine Dots refers to a mental exercise that Hyde students have been challenged with for more than twenty years. Try it yourself! Using a pencil, connect all nine dots with four straight connected lines and without lifting the pencil off the paper. (Solution is on page 16 of this brochure.)



The fifth output is intended to help students develop personal visions for their futures. Sixth, the Hyde graduate should persevere and be able to make and honor commitments in good times and bad. Seventh, it is essential that Hyde graduates maintain honest relationships, both personally and professionally. Eighth, we want our graduates to act upon curiosity throughout their lives and, ninth, we hope they will feel responsibility toward their communities as active citizens. The tenth output stresses the importance of living one's life by one's conscience.

It is our belief that these ten outputs would yield a jubilant customer. This identification of outputs motivates us to ensure that our teaching and our individual programs will result in these outputs. They assist us in setting the priorities of our programs, helping us to identify and limit tangential endeavors that don't contribute to these objectives and to emphasize those that do.

PARENT OUTPUTS

1. Personal Liberation from Children's Challenges
2. Vision Beyond Parenthood
3. Simultaneous Personal Growth with Children
4. Lifelong Bonds with the School and its People.
5. The Hyde Graduation

These powerful outputs are unusual ones for a school to foster in parents because schools have traditionally focused on the development of students. The first output refers to the concept of "letting go." There are many pressures in society and in the family that cause parents to take undue responsibility for the challenges that their children should face on their own. It is our goal that the Hyde Family Learning Center Program will help parents distinguish between their own burdens and those of their children. Second, Vision Beyond Parenthood refers to the fact that we have encountered many parents who have not thought enough about how they will conduct their lives after their youngest child "leaves the nest." This transition is a difficult one for many parents. Third, it is often a surprise to parents to discover that they experience personal growth right along with their children. They often come to Hyde so focused on their children that they may have neglected their own growth. Fourth, it is not at all unusual for a student to have a lifelong bond with the school; it is unusual for a parent to have such a bond. Finally, the Hyde graduation is an especially moving experience for parents as they stand in the audience while their children deliver a graduation speech.

There was a great deal of heated yet healthy debate among faculty and staff in arriving at these fifteen outputs. This got us thinking in the deepest sense about our purpose as a school and enabled us to move toward a consensus of this purpose. Now that the "end (i.e., the outputs) is in mind," we return to the beginning and the **Inputs** of the Hyde system.

INPUTS

Faculty
Staff
Students
Parents
Alumni

Governing Boards
Hyde Foundation
Education Network

-e.g. Associations, Counselors,
External Training

Facilities
Income
Legacy
Regions
Societal Culture
Vendors

The first five inputs are self-explanatory, in that they constitute the people of Hyde. While each of these five groups may play different roles (and some play multiple roles), all combine to offer the human inputs to Hyde.

INPUTS

FACULTY
STAFF
STUDENTS
PARENTS
ALUMNI

GOVERNING BOARDS
HYDE FOUNDATION
EDUCATION NETWORK
-ASSOCIATIONS/COUNSELOR
-EXTERNAL TRAINING

FACILITIES
INCOME
LEGACY
REGIONS
SOCIETAL CULTURE
VENDORS

The next three inputs relate to external leadership and guidance. The Board of Governors and the Board of Advisors hold the overall responsibility for the governance of the school. The Hyde Foundation, in its efforts to apply the Hyde concept "beyond the gates," also offers an input. For example, much of the national attention that the Hyde Foundation generates has resulted in media attention and admissions for the school. Finally, there is an education network external to the campus that plays an important role. Our associations with other schools enable us to learn about new practices and trends.

Educational counselors refer approximately one third of the students who attend Hyde. Members of our faculty regularly attend workshops and conferences to enhance the art and science of their teaching.

The final six inputs relate to our non-human resources. First, the facilities — buildings, library, playing fields, gymnasium, ropes course, computers, etc. — are primary resources. Second, the income we receive from tuitions and development is an obvious input to our system. Third, we have a legacy - a tradition and history that guides us. Fourth, there are over twenty Hyde parent regions that enhance our program in many ways, including generating admissions interest and helping us orient new families to Hyde. Fifth, there is an external societal culture (both positive and negative) that students and parents bring to campus. Whether positive or negative, it is an input that is included in the system. Finally, our vendors - the people who deliver our gas and oil, sell books and athletic equipment, or plow our roads in the winter - provide constant inputs.

Now we have discussed the Mission, the Outputs, and the Inputs of the Hyde system. Thus far, the Systems Chart is relatively simple. These three components alone will yield a more lucid understanding of Hyde as a system, but it is the Transformation Process, the most complex component, where the work of Hyde School is done. It is the central clearinghouse where all the inputs combine to create the outputs.

TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Three groups undergo a transformation process: students, faculty, and parents. While each one of these sub-systems is unique, some characteristics are shared by all three. Let us first note that atop the transformation process are the Five Words and Five Principles:

FIVE WORDS

Courage
Integrity
Leadership
Curiosity
Concern

FIVE PRINCIPLES

Destiny: Each of us is gifted with a unique potential.
Humility: We believe in a power and a purpose beyond ourselves.
Conscience: We attain our best through character and conscience.
Truth: Truth is our primary guide.
Brother's Keeper: We help others attain their best.

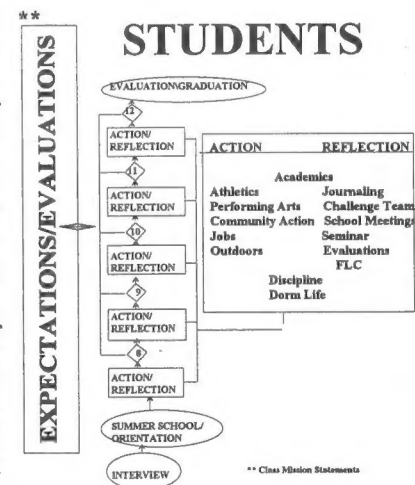
The Words and Principles have been placed on the top of the chart and the people who drive the transformation process have been placed on the bottom. This deliberate placement is intended to remind us that Hyde values principles over personalities. However, the personalities are essential because principles have no ability to defend themselves. Only people can ensure that human principles will be honored.

The Board of Governors, the final authority at Hyde, are listed at the bottom. The Headmaster reports directly to them. Then come various teachers and administrators who report to the Headmaster but are responsible for the school's programs (e.g., challenge teams, dining services, alumni, department chairs, parent regions, classes, and athletic teams, etc.). The staff plays a critical role in ensuring that the human and physical resources of the school are in optimal working order so as to provide the fifteen outputs in the system.

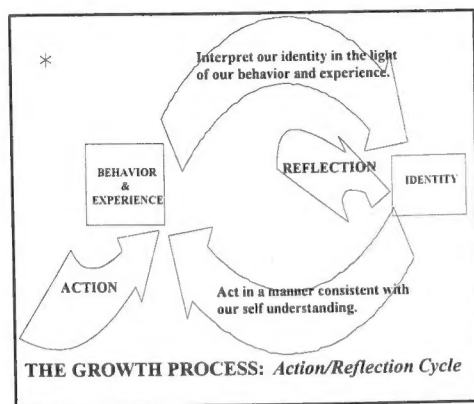
STUDENTS in the Transformation Process

We turn now to the three groups within the transformation process. The students are placed in the center of the chart because they represent the primary focus of Hyde School; the commitment to their personal growth is the reason why Hyde School was founded and why it exists today. We felt that it was important for the chart to reflect personal growth as an upward journey. Thus, the student transformation begins at the bottom of the chart with the admissions interview. That is where the student enters the Hyde system.

After the interview, the student may enter Summer School, where most students begin their Hyde programs. All students have some form of orientation regardless of when they enter. Once they begin at Hyde, they experience what we call the action-reflection cycle. We maintain that Hyde is a "socially embodied moral argument that works on an action-reflection cycle." The argument is our belief that every individual has a unique potential. The action-reflection cycle is more thoroughly explained in a Hyde Concepts pamphlet entitled Hyde School's Action/Reflection Cycle (1993).



In the Systems Chart, there is a small diagram called *the action-reflection cycle*:



Note the square on the left labeled "Behavior" and the square on the right labeled "Identity". The process begins with action: "as I act, my actions cause me to begin to have a new view of myself, perhaps as a morally upright person." Thus, the arrow leads from Behavior and experience across to Identity. "As I accept and develop this identity of myself, I then will act in a manner consistent with this identity." Thus, the arrow leads back to Behavior. In short, our actions help form a new identity and this new identity will guide us and inspire us to continue to engage in actions that support this new identity.

For the student, the action components include athletics, performing arts, community action, jobs, and outdoor wilderness programs. Reflection components include journaling, challenge teams, school meeting, seminar, evaluations, and the Family Learning Center. These components have been listed in the action-reflection box under "action" or "reflection." Academics, discipline, and dormitory life are listed in the middle because they are entities that combine elements of both action and reflection. In actuality, there is action in most reflection and reflection in most action.

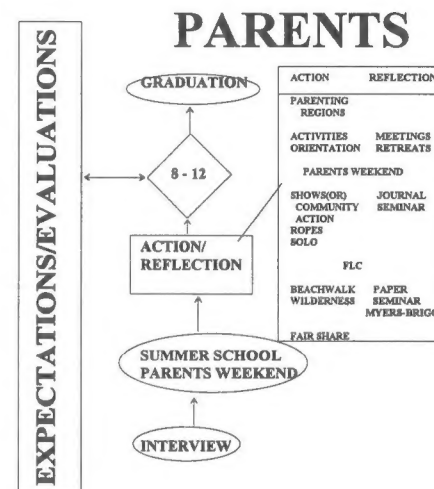
But to return to our incoming student: after the student completes an orientation program and experiences the action-reflection cycle in that program, he or she will be assigned to a grade level (i.e., grades eight through twelve) where there is further action and reflection. There are also expectations and evaluations, noted with the long bar to the left of the student diagram. A student must meet appropriate expectations on the action-reflection cycle depending upon grade

level, and will undergo evaluations by peers, faculty, and parents. The student will then advance to the next grade level and once again undergo the action and reflection cycle components for that grade's curriculum, as well as its expectations and evaluations. This process continues on through the twelfth grade, after which the student will experience the senior evaluation process and ultimately the Hyde graduation.

PARENTS in the Transformation Process

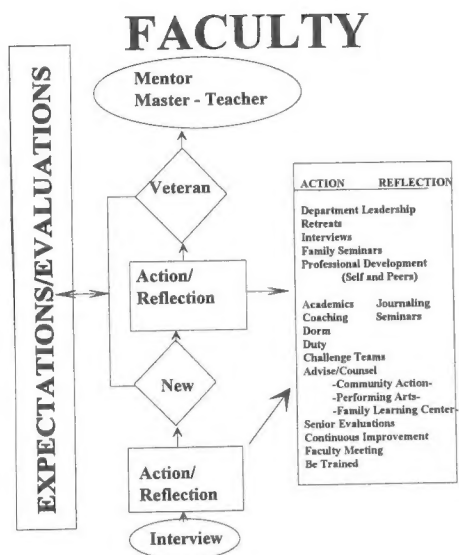
Parents also have an admissions interview and typically will participate in the Summer School Parents Weekend as the initial experience after the interview. Parents also enter into an action-reflection cycle which, like the student process, has corresponding components. In terms of action, parents are involved in regional activities, orientation activities, performing in shows for the Family Learning Center, participating in the ropes course, performing a family

solo, doing a beach walk, taking a wilderness trip. On the reflection side, parents participate in activities such as meetings, retreats, journaling, the seminar, and paper writing. The Family Learning Center incorporates both action and reflection as do Parents Weekends. Just as students experience expectations and evaluations on the way to graduation, so do parents whether their children enter as eighth graders or twelfth graders. The ultimate goal for the parents is to arrive at graduation alongside their children.



FACULTY in the Transformation Process

Finally, we turn to the faculty in the transformation process. As with the other two groups, teachers begin with an interview and enter into the action-reflection cycle. Note the two diamonds on the chart, one



for new faculty and one for veterans; hence, the dotted line approximately a third of the way down the action-reflection box. Below the dotted line are the action-reflection cycle components for new faculty. ("New" is defined as having spent three years or less at Hyde.) New faculty members are involved in everything from academics and coaching to journaling and seminars. They participate in dormitory supervision and evening duty. They are involved in challenge teams.

They are involved in advising,

counseling, community action, performing arts, the Family Learning Center, and senior evaluations. They commit to C.I.P. They attend faculty meetings and, initially, they simply agree to be trained. Faculty members, like students and parents, experience a series of expectations and evaluations on their way to eventually becoming master teachers.

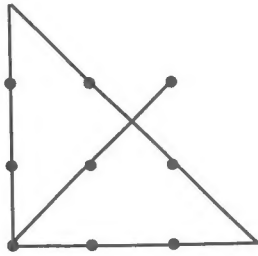
After the third year, faculty members enter the veteran diamond of the action-reflection cycle, which finds them engaged in leadership in the Hyde system. For example, a teacher might become a Department Head. After the third year, a teacher would be expected to be able to facilitate a Family Learning Center retreat. We expect veteran faculty members to be able to do admissions interviews. They should be able to facilitate family seminars at Parents Weekends and make a commitment to professional development. This phase would find them striving to enrich their own pedagogy and to teach other teachers in workshop or conference format. Thus, while faculty, students, and parents are affected by the Five Words and Five Principles and the people who drive the system, each group experiences a unique program (consider it a **sub-system**) within the Hyde system.

If we assemble the inputs, the transformation process, the outputs, and the mission of Hyde School, we have "The Hyde System." We seek to follow this system and to ensure that this system is in control, that it is working at optimal efficiency and is achieving the mission of the school. CIP and Systems Thinking provide a tremendous opportunity for Hyde School. We have long maintained that every

individual has a unique potential. However, we have never had any way of working on the school's collective potential. What is Hyde School's potential? How do we attain it? CIP provides a path to the answers to these questions.

Malcolm W. Gauld
1993

Solution to the Nine Dots Problem found on page 5:



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